

HOUSE BILL 347

By Tidwell

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 43,  
Chapter 37, relative to biobased products.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 43, Chapter 37, is amended by  
designating the current chapter as Part 1 and by adding the following language as a new Part 2:  
§43-37-201.

(a) The Tennessee general assembly finds that:

(1) The efficient and economical production of biobased products  
is necessary for national energy security, national and state economic  
growth, and the integrity of the environment;

(2) The United States is dependent on imports of oil from  
unstable regions of the world and from nations whose interests may or  
may not converge with the interests of the United States;

(3) Dwindling oil reserves and increasing demand also threaten  
the nation's energy security;

(4) Increasing energy efficiency and producing and using fuels  
from domestically produced renewable biomass will ease this nation's  
dependence on foreign oil imports and domestic oil supplies;

(5) Production of biobased products in Tennessee will create jobs  
in this state through facilities construction, operation, and maintenance  
and through fabrication of products from locally grown biomass that are  
currently derived from petroleum;

(6) Production of biobased products will provide a new market for  
farmers' cash crops in Tennessee; and

(7) Displacement of petroleum products by biobased products will reduce:

(A) The hazards associated with oil spills and leaks and groundwater contamination from underground storage tanks; and

(B) Net carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere; and

(8) Reduction of emissions will help alleviate health problems related to exposure to emissions including respiratory and cardiovascular diseases and cancer.

(b) The general assembly also finds that construction of a Biomass Conversion Complex by the University of Tennessee will:

(1) Help position the state at the forefront of alternative fuels production through the Biomass Conversion Complex's unique capacity for integrated research of agricultural biomass, agricultural fibers, and bast fiber crops; biobased products; and cellulose conversion processes;

(2) Provide a hands-on learning environment that will produce a highly qualified workforce for an emerging industry; and

(3) Attract industry and jobs to the state as the only facility of its kind in the southeast region of the United States.

§43-37-202. The University of Tennessee is authorized to construct a Biomass Conversion Complex for the development and testing of agricultural biomass and bast fiber crop production techniques and cellulose conversion technology. Such development and testing will focus on increasing the efficiency and economy of creating biobased products.

§43-37-203. The University of Tennessee is encouraged to establish a research program focusing on the development of switchgrass as a biofuel feedstock in the state.

The research program should use the best science available, including genomics and biotechnology, to better understand and modify growth and cell wall composition; to ascertain best varieties and best management practices by geographic region; to disseminate production and economic research information on best management practices to farmers; and to address biosafety issues while improving switchgrass productivity.

SECTION 2. The provisions of this act shall not be construed to be an appropriation of funds and no funds shall be obligated or expended pursuant to this act unless such funds are specifically appropriated by the general appropriations act.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.